

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr John Simpson, a prisoner at HMP Wymott, on 13 November 2019

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

Our Vision

To carry out independent investigations to make custody and community supervision safer and fairer.

Our Values

We are:

Impartial: *we do not take sides*

Respectful: *we are considerate and courteous*

Inclusive: *we value diversity*

Dedicated: *we are determined and focused*

Fair: *we are honest and act with integrity*



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Summary

1. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman aims to make a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and community supervision. One of the most important ways in which we work towards that aim is by carrying out **independent** investigations into deaths, due to any cause, of prisoners, young people in detention, residents of approved premises and detainees in immigration centres.
2. We carry out investigations to understand what happened and identify how the organisations whose actions we oversee can improve their work in the future.
3. Mr John Simpson, who was 80 years old, died of septicaemia, chest infection, severe emphysema and heart failure on 13 November 2019, while a prisoner at HMP Wymott. We offer our condolences to Mr Simpson's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the care Mr Simpson received at HMP Wymott was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community.
5. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern.

Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer, to review Mr Simpson's clinical care at HMP Wymott.
7. The PPO has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Simpson's care, including his location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.

Previous deaths at Wymott

8. There have been seven previous deaths from natural causes at HMP Wymott in the last two years. There are no similarities between our findings in the investigation of Mr Simpson's death and the other deaths.

Key Events

9. On 9 November 2012, Mr John Simpson was sentenced to sixteen years imprisonment for sexual offences. He was sent to HMP Preston. Mr Simpson arrived into prison with a number of pre-existing medical conditions, including bronchiectasis (a long-term condition in which the airways of the lungs become abnormally widened leading to a build-up of excess mucus that can make the lungs more vulnerable to infection) and angina (a chest pain caused by the restriction of the blood supply to the muscles of the heart) for which he received regular reviews from both healthcare, and secondary care providers. Comprehensive care plans were devised to manage his treatment.
10. On 11 December 2018, he transferred to HMP Wymott. During his initial healthscreen his pre-existing medical conditions were noted, prescribed medications reviewed and careplans updated. Healthcare staff regularly reviewed Mr Simpson following his arrival at the prison.
11. On 8 November, during a review by a nurse, she noted Mr Simpson was lying on his bed and appeared pale and generally unwell. She took his observations and noted his oxygen saturation level was 55% (level of oxygen in the bloodstream, normal oxygen saturation level is between 95-100%). He also had a productive cough and was vomiting. She diagnosed him as having suspected sepsis (caused by the body's response to an infection, normal levels of the chemicals released into the bloodstream are increased and out of balance which can result in multiple organ damage and can prove to be fatal).
12. He was taken to hospital by emergency ambulance. Following a review by hospital staff, Mr Simpson was diagnosed with septicaemia and an exacerbation of COPD. He was admitted as an inpatient, placed on oxygen therapy and given intravenous antibiotics. He was not restrained.
13. Healthcare kept in regular contact with hospital staff gaining regular updates on Mr Simpson's condition. However, his condition continued to deteriorate.
14. His condition did not improve and in the early hours of 13 November, Mr Simpson died. A hospital doctor was confirmed his death at 3.44am.
15. A hospital doctor gave Mr Simpson's cause of death as:
 - 1a) septicaemia
 - 1b) chest infection
 - 1c) severe emphysema
 - 2) heart failure

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